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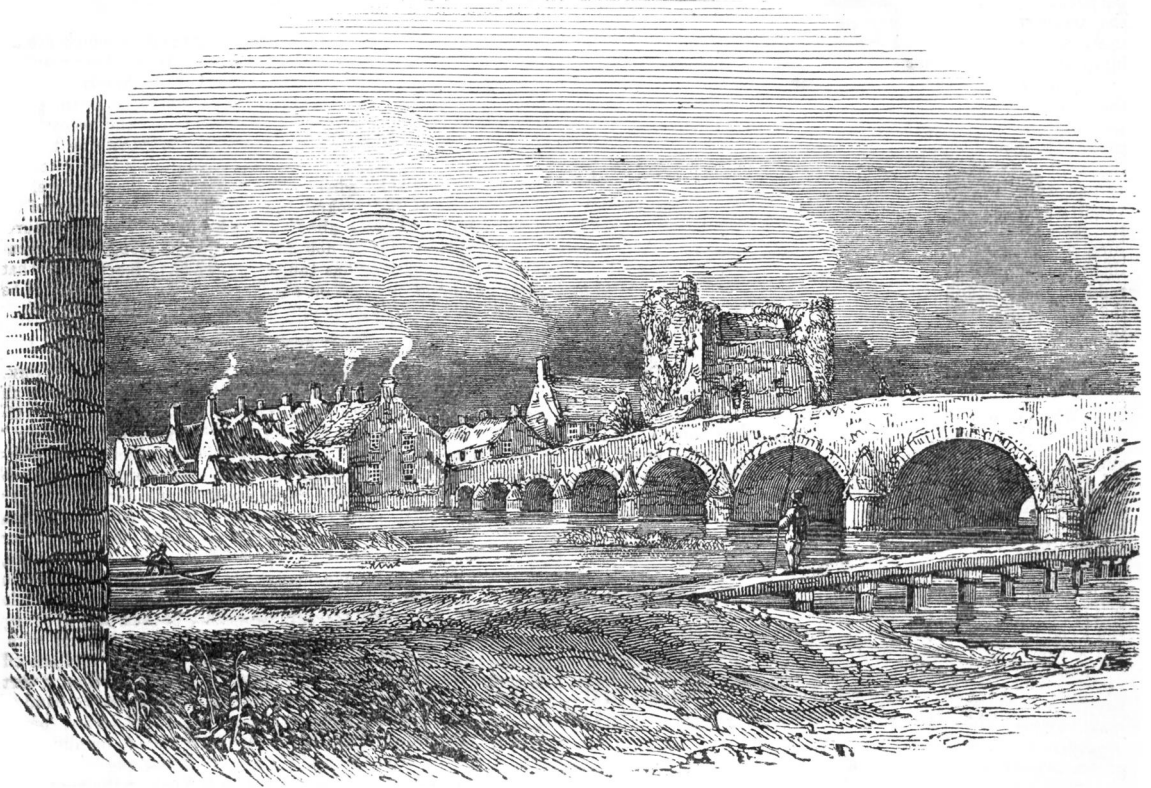
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VOLUME I.



LEIGHLIN-BRIDGE AND THE BLACK CASTLE.

THE ancient Bridge and Black Castle of Leighlin-bridge, seated on "the goodly Barrow," must be familiar to such of our readers as have ever travelled on the mail-coach road between Carlow and Kilkenny, for it is a scene of much picturesque beauty, and of a character very likely to impress itself on the memory.

These are the most striking features of the town called Leighlin-bridge, a market and post town, situated partly in the parish of Augha and barony of Idrone-East, and partly in the parish of Wells and barony of Idrone-West, in the county of Carlow, six miles south from the town of that name, and forty-five miles S.S.W. from Dublin. This town contains about 2000 inhabitants, and is seated on both sides of the Barrow; the bridge, which contains nine arches, dividing it into nearly equal portions: that on the east side consists of 178 houses, and that on the west of 191, being 369 houses in all. The parish church of Wells, the Roman Catholic chapel, and a national school-house, are on the Wells side of the river, as is also the ruined castle represented in our illustration.

To the erection of this castle the town owes its origin. As a position of great military importance to the interests of the first Anglo-Norman settlers in Ireland, it was erected in 1181, either by the renowned Hugh de Lacy himself, or by John de Clahull, or De Claville, "to whom De Lacy gave the marsh-shipp of all Leinster, and the land between Aghavoe and Leighlin."

From a minute description of the remains of this castle given by Mr Ryan in his History and Antiquities of the County of Carlow, a work of much ability and research, it appears that it was constructed on the Norman plan, and consisted of a quadrangular enclosure, 315 feet in length and 234 feet in width, surrounded by a wall seven feet thick, with a fosse on the exterior of three sides of the enclosure, and the river on the fourth. Of this wall the western side only is now in existence. The keep or great tower of this fortress, represented in our sketch, is situated at the north-western angle of the square, and is of an oblong form, and about fifty feet in height. It is much dilapidated; but one floor, resting on an arch, remains, to which there is an ascent by stone steps, as there is to the top, which is completely covered over with ivy, planted by the present possessors of the castle. At the other, or south-west angle of the enclosure, are the remains of a lesser tower, which is of a rotund form and of great strength, the walls being ten feet thick. It is still more dilapidated than the great keep, and is only 24 feet high, having a flight of steps leading to its summit.

The present name of the town, however, is derived from the bridge, which was erected in 1320 to facilitate the intercourse between the religious houses of old and new Leighlin, by Maurice Jakis, a canon of the cathedral of Kildare, whose memory as a bridge-builder is deservedly preserved, having also erected the bridges of Kilcullen and St Woolstan's over the Liffey,

both of which still exist. Previously to the erection of this bridge, the town was called *New Leighlin*, in contradistinction to the original Leighlin, a town of more ancient and ecclesiastical origin, which was situated about two miles to the west, and which was afterwards known by the appellation of *Old Leighlin*. The erection of this bridge, by giving a new direction to the great southern road, led rapidly to the increase of the new town and the decay of the old one, whose site is only marked at present by the remains of its venerable cathedral church.

In addition to the Black Castle and the bridge already noticed, Leighlin-Bridge had formerly a second castle, as well as a monastery, of which there are at present no remains. The former, which was called the White Castle, was erected in 1408 by Gerald, the fifth Earl of Kildare: its site, we believe, is now unknown. The monastery was erected for Carmelite or White Friars, under the invocation of the Virgin Mary, by one of the Carews, in the reign of Henry III., and was situated at the south side of the Black Castle. After the suppression of religious houses, this monastery, being in the hands of government, was in 1547 surrounded with a wall, and converted into a fort, by Sir Edward Bellingham, Lord Deputy of Ireland, who also established within it a stable of twenty or thirty horses, of a superior breed to that commonly used in Ireland, for the use of his own household, and for the public service. The dispersed friars did not, however, remove far from their original mansion when dispossessed of their tenements; they withdrew to a house on the same side of the river, about two hundred yards from the castle; and an establishment of the order was preserved till about the year 1827, when it became extinct, on the death of the last friar of the community.

As the English settlement here became very insecure towards the close of the fourteenth century, and was peculiarly exposed to the hostile attacks of the native Irish, who continued powerful in its immediate vicinity, a grant of ten marks annually was made by King Edward III. in 1371, to the Prior of this monastery, for the repairing and rebuilding of the house, which grant was renewed six years afterwards; and in 1378, Richard II., in consideration of the great labour, burden, and expense which the Priors had in supporting their house, and the bridge contiguous to it, against the king's enemies, granted to the Priors an annual pension of twenty marks out of the rents of the town of Newcastle of Lyons, which grant he confirmed to them in 1394, and which was ratified by his successors Henry IV. and V. in the first years of their reigns (1399, 1412), the latter monarch ordering at the same time that all arrears of rent then due should be paid.

In the civil wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the possession of Leighlin-Bridge and its castle became an object of much importance to the combatants on both sides. In 1577, when the celebrated chieftain of Leix, Rory Oge O'More, rose in rebellion, among other depredations he burned a part of the town of Leighlin-Bridge, and endeavoured to get possession of its castle, which was then feebly garrisoned under the command of Sir George Carew, constable of the fort and town. With the slender force of seven horse, as it is stated by Hooker, but under the cover of night, Carew made a sally on his assailants, numbering two hundred and forty, who, being taken by surprise, lost many men, and the remainder for a time fled. Having soon however discovered the extremely small force by which they had been attacked, they rallied, and in turn became the assailants, pursuing Carew's party to the gate of Leighlin-Bridge Castle, and some of them even entering within its walls; but by the bravery of the garrison they were soon expelled. Carew had two men and one horse killed, and every man of his party was wounded. The rebels lost sixteen men, among whom was one of their leaders, which so discomfited them that they retired, leaving one-half of the town uninjured.

In the great rebellion of O'Neil, at the close of the reign of Elizabeth, the castle of Leighlin-Bridge was repaired and garrisoned for the Queen, though the surrounding country was laid waste by the Kavanaghs. In the beginning of the succeeding reign (1604), the site of the castle, together with that of the monastery, &c. &c. were granted by the king to George Tutchett, Lord Awdeley, to be held of the crown for ever in common socage.

In the great rebellion of 1641, the castle of Leighlin-Bridge was garrisoned for the confederate Catholics, in 1646, with one hundred men, under the command of Colonel Walter Baginall; it was here also that in 1647 the Marquis of Ormond

assembled his forces, to attack the republicans, who had got possession of Dublin; and he rested his forces here in 1649. It was, however, surrendered to the parliamentary forces under Colonel Hewson in the following year, soon after which the main army under Ireton sojourned here for a time, and plundered the surrounding country. Since this period, Leighlin-Bridge has enjoyed the blessings of peace, and has made those advances in prosperity which follow in its train. Its market is on Monday and Saturday amply supplied with corn and butter, &c. and it has four well-attended fairs, on Easter Monday, May 14th, September 25th, and December 27th. Much beautiful scenery and many interesting remains of antiquity exist in its immediate vicinity. P.

IRISH MUSIC.

THE following song on the harp of our country has been sent to us by our friend Samuel Lover, the painter, poet, musician, dramatist, story-writer, and novelist of Ireland, for it is his pride to be in every thing Irish; and for this, no less than for his manly independence of character and sterling qualities of heart, we honour him. It cannot be said of him as of some of our countrymen at the other side of the water, that he is ashamed of us; and we are not, and we feel assured never shall be, ashamed of him.

We may remark that these verses owe their origin to an examination of Bunting's delightful "Ancient Music of Ireland"—a work of which we have already expressed our opinion in our first number—and are adapted to be sung to the first melody in that collection, "Sit down under my protection." We may also add, that it is the intention of the poet, when he prints the music and words together, to dedicate them to Mr Bunting, as a memorial of his gratitude for the services rendered to Ireland in the preservation of her national music—services which, as the author says, "will make his name be remembered amongst our bards."

S O N G.

BY SAMUEL LOVER.

Oh, give me one strain
Of that wild harp again,
In melody proudly its own,
Sweet harp of the days that are gone!
Time's wide-wasting wing
Its cold shadow may fling
Where the light of the soul hath no part;
The sceptre and sword
Both decay with their lord,
But the throne of the Bard is the heart!
And hearts, while they beat
To thy music so sweet,
Thy glory shall ever prolong,
Land of honour, and beauty, and song!
The beauty whose sway
Waked the bard's votive lay,
Hath gone to eternity's shade;
While, fresh in its fame,
Lives the song to her name,
Which the Minstrel immortal hath made!
Proud harp, of wild string,
Where thy sweetness did ring
O'er the silence of other lands,
By the magic of minstrel hands,
Too oft did its wail
Lead with sorrow the gale
O'er the land that was made to be free;
But, Isle of the West,
Raise thy emerald crest,
Songs of triumph shall yet ring for thee.

POVERTY.—Poverty has in large cities very different appearances. It is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest. They support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for to-morrow.

When you intend to marry, look first at the heart, next at the mind, then at the person.

Pride is a vice, which pride itself inclines every man to find in others and to overlook in himself.—*Johnson*.